

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

American Ingredients Co.

Chicago Manufacturing Center

Iso Certification Pays Off For American Ingredients

Client Profile:

American Ingredients is a manufacturer of food emulsifiers. The Dolton, Illinois manufacturer's client list reads like a "Who's Who" of the Fortune 100: General Mills, Pillsbury, Sara Lee, Union Carbide, and BP Amoco to name a few. The company employs less than 50 people.

Situation:

One by one American Ingredients' customers began clamoring for ISO certification. Representatives of South Suburban College, an affiliate of the Chicago Manufacturing Center (CMC), a NIST MEP network affiliate, approached the company with a proposal to help it achieve certification. The college asked the CMC, to make a second presentation, which impressed American Ingredients. The company agreed to work with CMC in its pursuit of ISO certification.

Solution:

CMC and American Ingredients began the certification process in January 1999. The company was challenged by the difficulty of procuring accurate ranges to write into the documentation and then coordinating those ranges with the respective scales and equipment. For example, documentation prior to ISO certification indicated one process needed a temperature range between 70 and 90 degrees. After asking the men on the floor, CMC discovered the range was much narrower.

After the lengthy documentation process was complete, the CMC team trained all the employees in the requirements for obtaining and maintaining the prestigious ISO certification. The company received its certification in April 2001.

Results:

- Achieved ISO certification.
- Experienced a net increase in business as a result of certification.
- Increased productivity by at least 20 percent.
- Set a company record for per-man output.
- Improved efficiency.
- Increased company's flexibility to respond to changing market demands.
- Improved customer satisfaction rate.
- Secured funding for capital expenditures.

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Exploring the possibility of expanding the facility in terms of property and machinery.

Testimonial:

"South Suburban College and the Chicago Manufacturing Center were somebody we could trust. A lot of people offer a low price but when it comes to implementation they are gone. Having a relationship with South Suburban College gave us a level of trust that they would lead us in the right direction."

Richard Hulfeld, Manufacturing Director